

Donations, Bequests and Gifts Policy

Purpose

The Town of Arlington, the Library Board of Trustees and the Director acknowledge that special gifts and bequests do not take the place of public support, but help to further enhance library facilities, services and collections. The library encourages the interest and involvement of residents and organizations through private support and adopts these guidelines to ensure that all gifts are appropriate to the library's mission.

Arlington Libraries Foundation: The Fundraising 501(c)(3) of the Library

Established in 2013, the Arlington Libraries Foundation conducts fundraising appeals and campaigns and secures and stewards the gifts, grants and endowments that provide essential funds toward the library's current and long-term goals. Donations to the Arlington Libraries Foundation benefit the Robbins Library and the Fox Branch Library. With the exception of gifts of materials, collections, art or decorative objects as noted below, donors are encouraged to direct gifts to the Arlington Libraries Foundation, the fundraising 501(c)(3) of the library.

Policies by Type of Gift

Donors may opt to give the following types of gifts directly to the library but are encouraged, whenever possible and appropriate, to direct such gifts to the Arlington Libraries Foundation for stewardship and distribution. Contributions of any type made in anticipation of naming opportunities must comply with the policies for donor recognition and naming as outlined later in this document.

1. Monetary gifts - The library welcomes gifts of cash or other investments.
2. Tribute gifts - The library welcomes monetary gifts in honor or memory of individuals or organizations, which may be unrestricted or designated for services, collections, or the purchase of materials for the facilities. When the library and/or Foundation receives a cash gift for the purchase of library materials, whether as a tribute or for any other purpose, the general nature or subject area of the materials to be purchased or program or services to be supported will be based upon the wishes of the donor. The library staff, in accordance with the needs and selection policies of the library, will select specific titles.
3. Real estate, securities or other personal property - The library will consider accepting gifts of real estate, securities or other personal property that either support or could be sold to support the mission of the library. Such offers will be handled by the Director, who in consultation with the Library Board of Trustees and the Town will determine the suitability of the gift and the terms of acceptance compatible with the library's mission and policies, the donor's intent, and applicable laws.

Donors may opt to give the following types of gifts directly to the library in accordance with the policies below. These types of gifts are not accepted by the Arlington Libraries Foundation.

4. Materials - Gifts of miscellaneous books or other materials in good condition are accepted with the understanding that items which are not added to collections are given to the Friends of the Robbins Library for resale or secondary donation.
5. Collections – Gifts of collections of books or any other kind will be accepted only by the Director in consultation with the Library Board of Trustees and with the understanding that the collection may not be kept intact.
6. Art and decorative objects - In general, gifts of art objects may be accepted if they are of local interest to the community, of a professional quality, well-executed, and in good condition. As with all other gifts, art objects will be accepted only with the donor's full agreement that the library has the right to handle or dispose of the gift in the best interests of the institution. Because of the library's limited display and storage areas and focus on its primary mission as a library and not a museum, potential donors of art and decorative objects must discuss any proposed gifts with the Director and Library Board of Trustees. No gifts that require extensive, regular special care or conservation will be accepted.
7. Other non cash gifts (gifts in kind): other non cash gifts may be accepted if they are deemed to be of value to the library for use in current or ongoing operations or services or to generate revenue for library priorities through their sale or use for fundraising. Donors must discuss proposed gifts in kind with the Director who may accept gifts in kind for current or ongoing use by the library and will consult with the Trustees on other gifts in kind, particularly any proposed gifts in kind that require resale or special care.

Acknowledgment and Valuation

The library will provide a timely, written acknowledgement of the receipt of gifts to the donor and, if desired, to a recognized individual or organization. Income tax regulations leave the determination of the gift's monetary value to the donor. Donors wishing to have an appraisal of their gifts for income tax purposes should have that done prior to donation.

Gift Acceptance, Right to Refuse, and Disposition

Acceptance: The Library Board of Trustees accepts all gifts of money, books and other materials, equipment, works of art, documents, photographs, or property of any kind from all donors including individuals, businesses or corporations, foundations, government grant makers, Library partner organizations, and supporting organizations, consistent with MGL Chapter 44 Section 53A.

Right to refuse: The library reserves the right to refuse any gift or grant that the Library Board of Trustees, in its sole discretion, deems to be not in the best interests of the library to accept.

Disposition: The library cannot guarantee that any gift will be a permanent part of the collection or furnishings. Resources with obsolete and/or misleading information may be discarded over time, and well-used libraries may sustain losses through theft, mutilation, and ordinary wear. Excess articles may be first offered to other Town departments and then discarded. If a gift is accepted by the library, the gift shall be final; no restriction on the library's ownership, possession, use, or disposition of the gift shall be effective other than restrictions approved by the express vote of the Library Board of Trustees.

Donor Recognition and Naming

To recognize generosity and inspire the participation of others, the library offers public recognition of donors. This may include acknowledging donors collectively or by name in the library, on the website, or on program materials or other assets. In specific cases, extraordinarily generous gifts may be associated with the opportunity to name a fund, physical space, collection, program, position, or other library asset.

Authority and Approval: As the philanthropic arm for the library and the entity authorized to solicit charitable contributions for the libraries, the Arlington Libraries Foundation is responsible to propose and coordinate donor recognition, naming opportunities, gift levels for naming, and specific naming proposals and donor recognition programs by submitting concepts and proposals for advance approval by the Library Board of Trustees. Each naming proposal will be reviewed by the Trustees with due diligence to ensure the naming avoids conflicts of interest, will reflect positively on the library, and will not adversely impact future giving or community support. The Library Board of Trustees in its sole discretion will be responsible to approve all program and naming pertaining to interior library spaces, services, programs, materials or digital assets and will provide preliminary approval for exterior naming (e.g. building or external spaces) which will be subsequently submitted to the Town Manager and Select Board for final approval.

In unusual cases, where significant philanthropic gifts are made to the library outside of the Arlington Libraries Foundation, the Trustees may ask the Arlington Libraries Foundation to include such donors in recognition programs and naming opportunities when warranted.

Honorary naming: Naming is normally reserved to recognize the extraordinary generosity of donors who make gifts at levels specified in association with naming opportunities. The Board of Library Trustees reserves the right under rare and extraordinary circumstances to consider naming opportunities without gifts or at gift amounts outside of normal naming levels for honorary purposes ("honorary naming"). Current staff, Trustees, Arlington Library Foundation board or staff members, and town officials are ineligible for honorary naming during their tenures. Two years must pass before consideration can be given to honorary naming for a deceased person or to recognize a significant historical event.

Anonymity: The library will treat a donor gift as anonymous if requested to do so by the donor but will not accept a gift anonymously that it would not accept publicly. Corporations and businesses are not granted anonymity.

Written agreement: Naming will be negotiated with terms clearly specified in formal written pledge/gift agreements between the donor, Arlington Libraries Foundation, and the Board of Library Trustees. In addition to details of the gift amount, purpose, and asset to be named, written agreements will address duration of naming, revocation, fulfillment of pledges as a condition for naming, and frustration of purpose in concert with the items defined below.

Revocation: The Library Board of Trustees may revoke naming recognition if the gift commitment supporting the naming is not fulfilled or if continued use of the name becomes damaging to the interests of the Library due to the donor's conduct or other compelling circumstances.

Pledges: If naming is associated with a gift to be paid in pledge installments, naming will normally not be installed until fulfillment of the final pledge payment. Exceptions must be submitted to the Trustees for approval.

Duration and Naming/Renaming: The duration of naming of physical spaces, programs, and assets must be specified in the formal written gift agreement and approved by the Trustees. In no cases will the duration of naming exceed the useful life of the space, program, or asset to be named. Renaming a previously named asset may be considered upon expiration of the prior naming agreement when applicable and with attention to considerations such as the reason for renaming, review of any agreement or other documentation, and the historical significance of the original naming. Substantial renovation of a space will be treated as equivalent to providing a new useful life for the space that is therefore eligible for renaming subject to the terms, conditions, or restrictions set forth in any relevant prior gift agreement.

Frustration of purpose: In the event circumstances change and the purpose for which a named gift was given cannot be fulfilled as originally intended, the Library will make best efforts to create a solution acceptable to the donor, the Arlington Libraries Foundation, and the Robbins Library Board of Trustees and to formalize the solution in a new or amended written agreement.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 3/10/20

Amended 3/8/22